

ON THE ARABIC TRANSLATIONS OF ARISTOTLE'S *METAPHYSICS**

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The starting-point and, at the same time, the foundation of recent scholarship on the Arabic translations of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* are Maurice Bouyges' excellent critical edition of the work in which the extant translations of the *Metaphysics* are preserved – *i.e.* Averroes' *Tafsīr* (the so-called “Long Commentary”) of the *Metaphysics*¹ – and his comprehensive account of the Arabic translations and translators of the *Metaphysics* in the introductory volume.² Relying on the texts made available by Bouyges and the impressive amount of philological information conveyed in his edition, subsequent scholars have been able to select and focus on more specific

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¹ Averroès, *Tafsir ma ba'd at-Tabi'at*. Texte arabe inédit établi par M. Bouyges (Beirut, 1938–1948) (= *Tafsīr*).

² M. Bouyges, *Notice*, in Averroès, *Tafsir ma ba'd at-Tabi'at*. Texte arabe inédit établi par M. Bouyges (Beirut, 1952) (= *Notice*). Valuable comprehensive surveys have been later provided by F. E. Peters, *Aristoteles Arabus. The Oriental Translations and Commentaries on the Aristotelian Corpus* (Leiden, 1968), pp. 49–52 (reviewed by H. Daiber, in *Gnomon*, 42 [1970]: 538–47); C. Genequand, *Ibn Rushd's Metaphysics. A Translation with Introduction of Ibn Rushd's Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics, Book Lam* (Leiden, 1984), pp. 5–11 (“The *Metaphysics* in Arabic: Translation and Commentaries”); A. Martin, “Aristote de Stagire. La *Métaphysique*. Tradition syriaque et arabe”, in *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques*, dir. par R. Goulet, vol. I (Paris, 1989), pp. 528–34, and C. Martini Bonadeo, “La *Métaphysique*. Tradition syriaque et arabe (t. I, 1989, p. 528–531 [sic]). Mise à jour bibliographique”, in *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques*, dir. par R. Goulet, Supplément (Paris, 2003), pp. 259–64; C. D'Ancona Costa, *La casa della sapienza. La trasmissione della metafisica greca e la formazione della filosofia araba* (Milano, 1996), pp. 57–65; *ead.*, “Le traduzioni di opere greche e la formazione del corpus filosofico arabo”, in C. D'Ancona Costa (ed.), *Storia della Filosofia nell'Islam Medievale* (Torino, 2004), vol. I, pp. 180–258.

topics, providing, for example, a closer inspection of the Arabic translations of the single books of the *Metaphysics* (books A, α , and Λ in particular),³ or a detailed comparison of some of these translations with the original text of the *Metaphysics*.⁴ A new

³ See P. Thillet, “Remarques et notes critiques sur les traductions arabes du livre Lambda de la Métaphysique d’Aristote”, in *Association Guillaume Budé. Congrès de Lyon, 18–23 Sept. 1958. Actes du Congrès* (Paris, 1960), pp. 114–25; R. Walzer, “On the Arabic versions of Books A, α and Λ of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*”, in *id.*, *Greek into Arabic: Essays on Islamic Philosophy* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 114–28; R. Walzer, “New light on the Arabic translations of Aristotle”, *Oriens*, 6 (1953), p. 92, in *id.*, *Greek into Arabic: Essays on Islamic Philosophy*, p. 61; A. Badawi, *La transmission de la philosophie grecque au monde arabe* (Paris, 1968), pp. 82–3; A. Neuwirth, ‘*Abd al-Latīf al-Baġdādī’s Bearbeitung von Buch Lambda der aristotelischen Metaphysik* (Wiesbaden, 1976), pp. 166–77; *ead.*, “Neue Materialien zur arabischen Tradition der beiden ersten Metaphysik-Bücher”, *Welt des Islam*, 18 (1977–78): 84–100; A. Bertolacci, “*Metafisica A*, 5, 986 a 22–26 nell’*Ilāhiyyāt* del *Kitāb al-Šifā* di Ibn Sīnā”, *Documenti e Studi sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale*, 10 (1999): 205–31; C. Martini, “The Arabic version of the Book *Alpha Meizon* of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* and the testimony of the Ms. Bibl. Apostolica Vaticana, Ott. Lat. 2048”, in J. Hamesse (ed.), *Les traducteurs au travail. Leurs manuscrits et leurs méthodes. Actes du Colloque international organisé par le “Ettore Majorana Centre for Scientific Culture”* (Erice, 30 septembre–6 octobre 1999) (Turnhout, 2001), pp. 173–206; *ead.*, “La tradizione araba della *Metafisica* di Aristotele. Libri α e A”, in C. D’Ancona and G. Serra (eds.), *Aristotele e Alessandro di Afrodisia nella tradizione araba. Atti del colloquio La ricezione araba ed ebraica della filosofia e della scienza greca*, Padova, 14–15 maggio 1999 (Padova, 2002), pp. 75–112; P. Thillet, “Remarques sur le livre *Lambda* de la ‘Métaphysique’”, *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales*, 70 (2003): 361–400; M. Geoffroy, “Remarques sur la traduction Uṣṭāṭ du livre *Lambda* de la *Métaphysique*, chapitre 6”, *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales*, 70 (2003): 417–36; R. Wisnovsky, *Avicenna’s Metaphysics in Context* (Ithaca [New York], 2003), pp. 99–112 (“Greek into Arabic: The Greco-Arabic Translations and the Early Arabic Philosophers”), pp. 269–75 (“Appendix I: Tables of Greco-Arabic Translation”).

⁴ The first attempt to compare two different Arabic translations of the same text with the original has been made by N. Mattock, “The early translations from Greek into Arabic: an experiment in comparative assessment”, in G. Endress and M. Schmeink (eds.), *Akten des Zweiten Symposium Graeco-Arabicum*, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, 3.–5. März 1987 (Amsterdam, 1989), pp. 73–102 (Mattock compares Uṣṭāṭ’s and Ishāq’s translations of the second part of chapter α , 1 [993 b 7–31]; the relation he establishes between the two translations is questioned by Martini, “La tradizione araba”, pp. 98–110). L. Bauloye, “La traduction arabe de la *Métaphysique* et l’établissement du texte grec”, in A. Motte and J. Denooz (eds.), *Aristotelica Secunda. Mélanges offerts à Christian Rutten* (Liège, 1996), pp. 281–9, underscores the importance of the earliest Arabic translation of the *Metaphysics* (by Uṣṭāṭ) for choosing among the variants of the Greek manuscripts (the examples that Bauloye provides are limited to books B and Z). Uṣṭāṭ’s translation has been studied by G. Endress in the context of the translations from Greek accomplished by the group of scholars to which he belonged (“The circle of al-Kindī. Early Arabic translations from the Greek and the rise of Islamic philosophy”, in G. Endress and R. Kruk [eds.], *The Ancient Tradition in Christian and Islamic Hellenism* [Leiden, 1997], pp. 43–76).

trend of research in recent times has been the study of these versions as part of the wider context of the Graeco-Arabic translation movement.⁵

The last volume of Bouyges' edition of Averroes' *Tafsīr* appeared more than fifty years ago, in 1948 (the introductory volume was published posthumously in 1952). The progress of research since then makes now possible a closer scrutiny and a more comprehensive evaluation of the Arabic translations of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. This is the aim of the present article.

Our sources of information on the Arabic translations of the *Metaphysics* can be divided into three main categories. First, there are the *testimonia* on the translations and translators of the *Metaphysics* that can be gathered from the Arabic bio-bibliographical literature, especially from Ibn al-Nadīm's *Kitāb al-Fihrist (Book of the Index)*. Second, there are the extant translations themselves, which are either quoted by Averroes in his *Tafsīr* of the *Metaphysics*, or reported in the margins of the manuscript of this work. Third, there is the so-called "indirect tradition" of the *Metaphysics* in Arabic – namely the writings by philosophers dealing, in different ways, with Aristotle's work – informing us either of the existence of translations not otherwise attested, or of the extent of the translations known from other sources.

In the first three sections of the present article, each of these sources will be taken into account. In section §1, a new interpretation of the available *testimonia* will be provided, and the original extent of the two major Arabic translations of the *Metaphysics* will be determined more precisely. Section §2 presents a comprehensive survey of the extant translations. In the third section (§3), the indirect tradition regarding book A will be considered, and the existence of an Arabic translation of A different from the extant one will be argued for. In the last section (§4), finally, the data gathered in the previous three

⁵ On the overall translation movement from Greek into Arabic, see G. Endress, "Die wissenschaftliche Literatur", in *Grundriss der Arabischen Philologie*, vol. II (Literaturwissenschaft), cur. H. Gätje (Wiesbaden, 1987), pp. 400–506; vol. III (Supplement), cur. W. Fischer (1992), pp. 3–152; D. Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture. The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbāsīd Society (2nd–4th / 8th–10th centuries)* (London and New York, 1998); *id.*, "Translations from Greek and Syriac", in *EP²*, vol. X, fasc. 167–168, pp. 225b–231a. See also L. E. Goodman, "The translation of Greek materials into Arabic", in M. J. L. Young *et al.* (eds.), *Religion, Learning and Science in the 'Abbasid Period* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 477–97.

sections will be reconsidered; their scrutiny will allow a division of the Arabic translations of the *Metaphysics* into three phases, and an indication of the main features of each of these phases.

§1 THE TESTIMONIA

Ibn al-Nadīm completed the *Fihrist* in 377 / 988. The earliest translation mentioned in the entry on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (by Uṣṭāṭ, in the first half of the 9th century) antedates Ibn al-Nadīm's lifetime by about a century. Due to its chronological proximity, I take the *Fihrist* as a faithful witness of the initial phase of the translation activity regarding the *Metaphysics*. The *Fihrist* had an immense impact on subsequent literature, and many derivatives of its entry on the *Metaphysics* can be found in later authors.⁶

Text 1: Description of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in the *Fihrist*

Account of the "Book of Letters", known as "Divine [Matters]" [= Aristotle's *Metaphysics*].

[a] This book is arranged according to the Greek letters. Its beginning is "A Minor", which was translated by Ishāq [ibn Ḥunayn]. What can be found of it [*i.e.* of the *Metaphysics* in Arabic translation by anybody] [goes up] to letter "M". This letter [*i.e.* "M"] was translated by Abū Zakariyā' Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī. Letter "N" does exist, but in Greek with Alexander [of Aphrodisias]'s commentary. These letters [*i.e.* "A Minor"- "M"] were translated by Uṣṭāṭ for al-Kindī, and he [*i.e.* al-Kindī] wrote a notice on it.

[b] Abū Bišr Mattā translated treatise "L" – namely the eleventh letter – with Alexander's commentary into Arabic. Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq translated this treatise into Syriac. Themistius commented on treatise L. Abū Bišr Mattā translated it with Themistius' commentary. Šamlī [also] translated it.

[c] Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn translated a number of the treatises [of this work]. Syrianus commented on treatise "B". It [*i.e.* treatise "B" together with Syrianus' commentary] was translated into Arabic. I saw it written in Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī's own hand in the list of his books.⁷

⁶ The *Fihrist*'s account is reproduced, almost *verbatim*, in Ibn al-Qifṭī (1172–1248), *Ta'rīḥ al-ḥukamā'*, ed. J. Lippert (Leipzig, 1903), pp. 41–2, and Ḥāḡḡī Ḥalīfa (1609–57), *Kašf al-zunūn*, ed. and transl. G. Flügel, 7 vols. (Leipzig, 1835–1858), #10448.

⁷ Al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, ed. G. Flügel, J. Rodiger, A. Müller, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1871–1872), vol. I, pp. 251, 25–252, 1 (the same text is reported in Bouyges, *Notice*, p. cxvii); English translations in Peters, *Aristoteles Arabus*, p. 49, and al-Nadīm, *The Fihrist. A Tenth-century Survey of Muslim Culture*, ed. and transl. by B. Dodge (New York and London, 1970), vol. II, pp. 606–7.

Section [a] provides a general description of the arrangement of the *Metaphysics* in Greek; the extent of its Arabic translations, and the authors of the Arabic version of the first and last book that have been translated; the most complete Arabic translation of this work. Section [b] deals in particular with the translations of book Λ and related Greek commentaries. Section [c], finally, offers additional information on other translators / translations.

Text 1 informs us of the following translations (in chronological order):

Uṣṭāt (9th c.) for al-Kindī (d. shortly after 256 / 870):⁸ books α -M

Šamlī (9th c.): book Λ

Ḥunayn ibn Iṣḥāq (808–873): Syriac translation of Λ

Iṣḥāq ibn Ḥunayn (d. 910): book α and some other books

Abū Bišr Mattā (d. 328 / 940): book Λ (twice, once with the commentary by Alexander of Aphrodisias, a second time with the commentary by Themistius)⁹

Abū Zakariyā' Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (d. 363 / 974): book M¹⁰

In Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (d. 363 / 974): book B (with the commentary by Syrianus)¹¹

⁸ See Endress "The circle of al-Kindī", pp. 52–3.

⁹ Taken literally, Text 1 would imply that Abū Bišr Mattā accomplished two distinct translations of book Λ . As M. Geoffroy notices ("Remarques"), however, it is not clear how these two translations relate to one another (*i.e.* whether they are identical or different), and how the latter relates to the commentary by Themistius. For, whereas the commentary by Alexander of Aphrodisias is a literal commentary – and Mattā's translation of Λ accompanying it is, in all likelihood, the Arabic version of the lemmata of Λ contained in Alexander's commentary – the commentary by Themistius is a paraphrase and does not include in any way the text of Λ . Mattā might have attached a translation of Λ to his version of Themistius' paraphrase. This translation might be the Arabic version of the Syriac translation of Λ by Ḥunayn ibn Iṣḥāq, which is mentioned in Text 1 [b] immediately before Themistius' commentary and its Arabic translation by Mattā. This would be in accordance with the fact that Mattā translated from Syriac, but remains, in lack of further evidence, a matter of speculation.

¹⁰ See G. Endress, *The Works of Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī*. An Analytical Inventory (Wiesbaden, 1977), pp. 27–8.

¹¹ The list of the books of Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, to which the translation of book B with the commentary by Syrianus belongs, is the catalogue of his library, not the inventory of his own works (see Endress, *The Works of Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī*, pp. 6–7). It cannot be excluded that the pronoun "it" (-*hā*) in "I saw it" (*ra'aytuḥā*) refers to "a number of the treatises" (*'iddat maqālāt*) at the beginning of [c], rather than to "treatise B" (*maqālat al-bā'*) in what follows (I thank Cristina D'Ancona for having brought this possibility to my attention); it is more likely, however, that the reference regards the element syntactically closer to "I saw it", *i.e.* to "treatise B". It is also possible that "it was translated" (*ḥuriġat*) refers only to "treatise B", not to Syrianus' commentary on this treatise (I am indebted to Cristina D'Ancona also on this point); but, in this case, Ibn al-Nadīm's mention of

About Uṣṭāṭ's translation Text 1 asserts basically two things: (i) that it started with book α , and (ii) that it ended with book M. For the expression “these letters”, in the sentence “these letters were translated by Uṣṭāṭ” in section [a], refers to books α -M. Let us see the implications of (i) and (ii) more in detail.

(i) The fact that Uṣṭāṭ's translation started with book α – the second book of the *Metaphysics* according to the Greek numeration – implies that in this translation the first book of the Greek *Metaphysics*, namely A, was either postponed to α , or missing. The latter alternative can be argued for in three ways. First, A is omitted by al-Fārābī, a few decades after Uṣṭāṭ's lifetime, in his description of the *Metaphysics* in the *Fī Agrād* (see below, §3). A and N are the only books of the *Metaphysics* that he does not take into account in this work, whereas he does mention all the other books, even the less relevant ones, like K.¹² Judging from the *Fī Agrād*, therefore, al-Fārābī was not acquainted with any Arabic translation of A. Since he probably had at his disposal Uṣṭāṭ's translation, this latter lacked in all likelihood book A. Second, the only book of the *Metaphysics* for which Averroes in the *Tafsīr* does not use Uṣṭāṭ's translation in any way (neither as main translation, nor as secondary translation) is A (see below, §2). Third, book A is also probably missing in the copy of Uṣṭāṭ's translation owned by the copyist of the manuscript of the *Tafsīr*: for this copyist reproduces Uṣṭāṭ's translation in the margin of the manuscript whenever Averroes does not use this translation as his main translation, but he omits doing that in the case of book A (see below, §2).

Therefore – if we exclude the unlikely possibility that al-Fārābī, Averroes and the copyist of the *Tafsīr* all had access to an incomplete copy of Uṣṭāṭ's translation – book A was probably missing in this translation.¹³ Many explanations for the absence of A in Uṣṭāṭ's translation have been advanced.¹⁴

an Arabic translation of *Metaphysics* B would be pointless, since he has already stated in [a] that books A–M (B included) are available in Arabic.

¹² See below, n. 55.

¹³ In Text 1[b], the reference to book Λ as the “eleventh letter” regards the Greek alphabet (in which Λ is actually the eleventh letter) rather than the order of books within the *Metaphysics* (I wish to thank Dimitri Gutas for having brought this point to my attention). Ibn al-Nadīm, however, does not warn the reader that the eleventh letter of the Greek alphabet does not correspond to the eleventh book of the *Metaphysics*, but to the twelfth. This could suggest – *e silentio* – that one of the eleven books of the *Metaphysics* preceding Λ was not

(ii) Furthermore, Uṣṭāṭ's translation did not encompass the last book of the *Metaphysics*. It is evident from section [a] itself that, at the time of Ibn al-Nadīm, the Arabic *Metaphysics* ended with book M ("What can be found of it [goes up] to letter M"), and did not include book N, which is mentioned as extant in Greek – *i.e. only* in Greek. Moreover, book N is absent in al-Fārābī's account of the *Metaphysics* in the *Fī Agrād* (see below, §3) and, together with book M, in Averroes's *Tafsīr* (see below, §2). Thus, in all likelihood Uṣṭāṭ's translation lacked also book N.

On the basis of this evidence, it is safe to assume that Uṣṭāṭ's translation was not an integral translation: it originally encompassed only books α-M (with the exclusion of A and N).¹⁵ Together with the *absence* of books A and N, the *presence* of book M in Uṣṭāṭ's translation has to be underscored.¹⁶

The incomplete character of the other major translation mentioned in Text 1 (Ishāq's translation) is evident from section [c]. Text 1, however, does not provide any information on the exact identity of the books that this translation actually encompassed. Their number can be assessed on the basis of the extant translations and the indirect tradition. Among the extant translations, Ishāq's version of book α is preserved almost in full, and fragments of what is likely his version of books Γ, Θ, I and (possibly) Λ are extant as well (see below, §2). The indirect tradition allows us to extend further the range of books probably belonging to Ishāq's translation. For

translated into Arabic at the time of Ibn al-Nadīm – a situation compatible with the supposed absence of A from Uṣṭāṭ's translation.

¹⁴ See the survey by Martini, "La tradizione araba", pp. 80–97; "The Arabic version", pp. 181–3.

¹⁵ Despite Bouyges' remarks (*Notice*, pp. cxxviii–cxxxix, cxlix), in recent scholarship the *Fihrist* is often taken as attesting that this translation was, originally, complete (see Peters, *Aristoteles Arabus*, p. 50; Martin, "Aristote de Stagire. La *Métaphysique*", p. 531). It cannot be excluded, of course, that Uṣṭāṭ's translation was originally complete, and that, for some accident of the manuscript tradition, two of its books (A, N) remained unknown to Ibn al-Nadīm, al-Fārābī and subsequent Arab philosophers. This scenario, however, appears unlikely.

¹⁶ The presence of book M in Uṣṭāṭ's translation of the *Metaphysics* excludes, for example, the possibility of invoking the "Platonism" of al-Kindī's circle (to which Uṣṭāṭ belonged) in order to explain the fact that this translation did not include book A (this line of interpretation is suggested by Martini, "The Arabic version", pp. 182–3; "La tradizione araba", p. 112). Since book M (present in Uṣṭāṭ's translation) is not less anti-Platonic than book A, the anti-Platonic character of A appears to be unrelated to its absence from Uṣṭāṭ's translation.

Avicenna's paraphrases of some passages of books B and Δ in the *Ilāhiyyāt* (*[Science of] Divine Things*) of the *Kitāb al-Šifā'* (*Book of the Cure*) are based on a translation different from Uṣṭāṭ's;¹⁷ this translation is probably Ishāq's. Therefore, Ishāq's translation encompassed (at least) seven books: α, B-Δ, Θ-I, Λ.

For some other translations undertaken in the second half of the 10th century, Text 1 is complemented by an annotation in the manuscript of Averroes' *Tafsīr*.

Text 2: Annotation in the manuscript of Averroes' *Tafsīr* of the *Metaphysics*

[a] The twelfth [treatise of the *Metaphysics* = M] was translated by Ibn Zur'a. The thirteenth [= N] by Naẓīf ibn Yumn.

[b] As for the group of [treatises] commented upon by the Judge [*i.e.* Averroes], they are [in] the translation by Uṣṭāṭ, except for the treatise designated as "A Major". The last treatise that happens to be [translated] by Uṣṭāṭ [in Averroes' *Tafsīr*] is "L". [The translation of] treatise "A Major" is due to Naẓīf ibn Yumn.¹⁸

The twelfth and thirteenth books of the *Metaphysics* mentioned in section [a] are, respectively, M and N (not Λ and M), due to

¹⁷ As for book B, see Ibn Sīnā, *al-Šifā'*, *al-Ilāhiyyāt* (2), ed. M. Y. Mūsā, S. Duniyā, S. Zāyid (Cairo, 1960), maqāla 6, faṣl 5 (henceforth: VI, 5), p. 299, 2–3: "[...] for this reason someone belittled these things (*istaḥaffa bihā*)"; *Metaph.* B, 2, 996a32–33: "And so for this reason some of the Sophists, *e.g.* Aristippus, ridiculed mathematics (*προεπηλάκιζεν αὐτάς*)"; Uṣṭāṭ's translation, p. 184, 6–7: "For this reason some of the Sophists rejected this cause (*yarfiḏūna hādihi al-'illa*), as Aristīfūs did". Avicenna, VI, 5, p. 300, 7: "Were these [*i.e.* the investigations of the four causes] independent sciences (*wa-law kānat hādihi 'ulūman mufradatan*), [...]"; *Metaph.* B, 2, 996b1–3: "But if there are several sciences of the causes (*εἰ γε πλείους ἐπιστῆμαι τῶν αἰτίων εἰσὶ*), and a different science for each different principle, [...]"; Uṣṭāṭ's translation, p. 184, 9–10: "It is known that the sciences of the causes are many (*fa-ma'lūmun anna 'ulūma al-'ilali kaṭṭratun*) and each primary cause has the principle of a different science". As for book Δ, see Avicenna, III, 10, p. 152, 12–14: "To [the relative having different terms] belong: ... the one [whose difference] is not ascertained in any way, like the exceeding and the deficient (*miṭla al-zā'id wa-al-nāqiṣ*) ..."; Δ, 15, 1021a3–4: "the relation of that which exceeds to that which is exceeded (*τὸ δ' ὑπερέχον πρὸς τὸ ὑπερεχόμενον*) is numerically quite indefinite"; Uṣṭāṭ's translation, p. 609, 8–9: "As for the superior with regard to what it is superior to (*ammā al-a'lā ilā alladī ya'lūhu*), it, in a universal way, is not definite according to number". On the translations of the *Metaphysics* used by Avicenna in the *Ilāhiyyāt*, see A. Bertolacci, *The Reception of Aristotle's Metaphysics in Avicenna's Kitāb al-Šifā': Textual and Doctrinal Analysis*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, May 2005, Chapter 8.

¹⁸ Text in Bouyges, *Notice*, pp. lvi (= Annotation 2); cp. p. cxviii.

the lack of K among the books commented upon by Averroes.¹⁹ Thus, section [a] deals with the Arabic translation of the last two books of the *Metaphysics* (M and N), not commented upon by Averroes. Section [b], on the other hand, takes into account the Arabic translations of the books commented upon by Averroes.

Text 2, despite some slight imprecision,²⁰ is an important document in as much as it informs us of two more translators and their translations:

‘Īsā ibn Zur‘a (943–1008): book M
Naẓīf ibn Yumn (or: Ayman) al-Rūmī (second half of 10th century):²¹
books A and N

It is noteworthy that, according to Text 2, Naẓīf translated the two books of the *Metaphysics* probably missing in Uṣṭāṭ’s translation, according to the reconstruction proposed here. In this regard, Naẓīf’s translation appears as the completion of Uṣṭāṭ’s.

To summarize: a careful inspection of the most important document at our disposal on the Arabic translations of the *Metaphysics* – the relevant passage of the *Fihrist* (Text 1) – shows that the first and most extensive of these translations (Uṣṭāṭ’s) originally encompassed books α -M, omitting books A and N. As for the second major translation (Iṣḥāq’s), the evidence offered by the indirect tradition (Avicenna’s probable recourse to this version) complements the information provided by the *Fihrist*, and indicates that this translation comprised (at least) seven books (α , B- Δ , Θ -I, Λ). A second *testimonium* (Text 2) informs us of some late 10th century translations not mentioned in the *Fihrist*.

¹⁹ Book Λ , M and N are numbered, respectively, as eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth, due to the absence of K, also in another annotation of the manuscript of Averroes’ *Tafsīr* (see Bouyges, *Notice*, p. lv, Annotation 1). As to books M and N, the same happens in Averroes’ proemium to Z (*Tafsīr*, p. 745, 4–6).

²⁰ The information that section [b] provides on Uṣṭāṭ’s translation is not completely correct. For, as will be seen in the next section, Averroes uses a translation different from Uṣṭāṭ’s in his commentary not only of book A, but also of most of book α and of the first part of book Λ . Uṣṭāṭ’s translation of α and Λ , however, is reported in the margins of Averroes’ *Tafsīr*, whenever Averroes does not comment on it. Text 2 is not totally unreliable, therefore, in connecting all of Averroes’ *Tafsīr* (except book A) with Uṣṭāṭ’s translation.

²¹ Bouyges, *Notice*, pp. cxxii, lvi; Endress, “Die wissenschaftliche Literatur”, in *Grundriss der Arabischen Philologie*, vol. II, p. 443, n. 103; J. L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*, 2nd ed. (Leiden, 1992), pp. 132–4; Gutas, *Greek Thought*, p. 151, n. 1.

§2 THE EXTANT TRANSLATIONS

Some of the Arabic translations of the *Metaphysics* mentioned in Texts 1–2 are extant. Most of the extant translations are preserved in Averroes' *Tafsīr* of the *Metaphysics*.

Averroes' *Tafsīr* is a fundamental witness to the different versions of the Arabic *Metaphysics* in three distinct ways. (i) The translations upon which Averroes mainly relies for commenting on each book of the *Metaphysics* are quoted in portions of variable length (Textus) at the beginning of the single units of the *Tafsīr*. Each of the Textus, in its turn, is further divided into sentences (Lemmata), which are quoted a second time and commented upon by Averroes one after the other. (ii) In the explanations of the Lemmata (Commenta), Averroes occasionally quotes alternative translations of the passages he is commenting upon. (iii) Other translations have been reported by later copyists in the margins of the manuscript (Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Or. 2074) preserving the *Tafsīr*.

An overview of the versions of the *Metaphysics* available in the *Tafsīr* as (i) main translations in Textus / Lemmata, (ii) additional translations in the Commenta, (iii) marginal translations, is provided in Table 1.

Averroes' commentary on books K, M and N – of whose existence, however, he was aware – and on the first part of book A (from the beginning until A, 5, 987 a 6) is not extant.²² The

²² In the introduction to his commentary on Λ , Averroes provides an accurate description of book K, which he designates by means of the Arabic letter *Yā'* (*Tafsīr*, p. 1404, 1–8). Immediately afterwards (p. 1404, 9–11), before the description of book Λ (*Lām*), he states: “This is what we find concerning the order of the books which have come down to us and which come before *Lām*, but we do not find book *Kāf* in the order of letters, nor has it come down to us” (Engl. transl. in Genequand, *Ibn Rushd's Metaphysics*, p. 64). This statement, isolated from the context, has been taken as indicating that Averroes did not know book K at all (see *Notice*, p. cli). On the contrary, it only attests that he did not know this book *as book Kāf*, but *as book Yā'* (on the different designations of the books of the *Metaphysics* in Arabic, see *Notice*, pp. xix–xx, cliii–clv). Likewise, Averroes appears to be familiar also with books M (*Mīm*) and N (*Nūn*), of which he provides a brief description in the same introduction (p. 1405, 1–3; cp. p. 1398, 5–7). D. Gutas has shown that the description of the books of the *Metaphysics* in Averroes' introduction to Λ is distinct from Averroes' account of the proem of Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary on the same book (D. Gutas, Review of Genequand, *Ibn Rushd's Metaphysics*, *Der Islam*, 64 [1987]: 122–6, p. 124). Hence Averroes might have been directly acquainted with these three books (books K and M by means of Uṣṭāṭ's translation, book N by means of Naẓīf's translation; see above, §1). That Averroes did not originally include in the *Tafsīr* a

Table 1: The Arabic translations of the *Metaphysics* in Averroes' *Tafsīr*

Books	Translations in the Textus and Lemmata	Translations occasionally referred to in the Commenta	Translations copied in the margins of the manuscript
α	Ishāq (until 995 a 17) Uṣṭāt (995 a 17–20)	Uṣṭāt	Uṣṭāt (until 995 a 17)
A	from 987 a 6: Nazīf		
B	Uṣṭāt		
Γ	Uṣṭāt	Ishāq (?)	
Δ	Uṣṭāt		
E	Uṣṭāt		
Z	Uṣṭāt		
H	Uṣṭāt		
Θ	Uṣṭāt	Ishāq (?)	
I	Uṣṭāt	Ishāq (?)	
K	–		
Λ	Mattā (until 1072 b 16) Uṣṭāt (1072 b 16–1073 a 13) Mattā (from 1073 a 14)	Uṣṭāt; Yaḥyā; Šamlī or Ishāq	Uṣṭāt (until 1072 b 16) Yaḥyā (1070 a 5–7)
M	–		
N	–		

Arabic translations of these parts of the *Metaphysics* are known only by means of the indirect tradition.

Averroes comments on book α before commenting on book A. Since, as we have seen, book A was lacking in the first (Uṣṭāt's) translation of the *Metaphysics*, α was regarded by the Arabs, from the very beginning, as the opening book of this work. The belief that α was the first book of the *Metaphysics* persisted even when book A was later translated.

As for book α , the translation in the Textus and Lemmata is Ishāq's, as indicated by a marginal annotation.²³ The final lines

commentary on K, M and N appears less certain than it is portrayed by Bouyges (see *Notice*, pp. xviii, cli).

²³ *Tafsīr*, vol. I, p. 50, 5–6.

(995 a 17–20), however, according to the same marginal annotation, are taken from “another translation” (*tarğama uhrā*).²⁴ Since these lines are missing in the translation copied in the margins of the manuscript of the *Tafsīr*,²⁵ which is there attributed to Uṣṭāt,²⁶ the translation of 995 a 17–20 quoted and commented upon by Averroes is, in all likelihood, Uṣṭāt’s. In the *Commentum*, Averroes refers to “another translation” (= Uṣṭāt’s translation copied in the margin) of 994 b 25–27.²⁷

Iṣḥāq’s translation of *α* is also extant independently of Averroes’ *Tafsīr*. It is the version quoted and commented upon by Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī in his commentary on *Metaphysics α*.²⁸ It is also probably the version used by Avicenna in his paraphrase of this book within the *Ilāhiyyāt*.²⁹ Furthermore, an abridged version of Iṣḥāq’s translation of *α*, 1–2 (993a30–994b31) is preserved in the MS Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, *ḥikma* 6, in which texts originally belonging to Avicenna’s library have been copied.³⁰

²⁴ *Tafsīr*, vol. I, p. 50, 8–10.

²⁵ *Tafsīr*, vol. I, p. 50, 1 (bottom of page).

²⁶ *Tafsīr*, vol. I, p. 3, 1 (bottom of page), p. 49, 1, n. 1 (bottom of page).

²⁷ *Tafsīr*, vol. I, p. 40, 10–12.

²⁸ *Tafsīr li-al-maqāla al-ūlā min Kitāb Mā ba’d al-ṭabī‘a li-Aristāṭālīs al-mawsūma bi-al-alif al-ṣuḡrā*, in *Rasā’il falsafiyya li-al-Kindī wa-al-Fārābī wa-Ibn Bāḡḡa wa-Ibn ‘Adī*, ed. ‘A. Badawī (Bengasi, 1973; repr. Beirut, 1980), pp. 168–203; also in *Maqālāt Yaḥyā Ibn ‘Adī al-falsafiyya*, ed. S. Ḥulayfāt (Amman, 1988), pp. 220–62, and *Aristāṭālīs-i ḥakīm, Naḥustīn maqāla-i Mā ba’d al-ṭabī‘a mawsūm bi-maqālat al-Alif al-ṣuḡrā tarğama-i Iṣḥāq ibn Ḥunayn bā Yaḥyā b. ‘Adī wa Tafsīr-i Ibn-i Ruṣd*, bā taṣḥīḥ wa muqaddima wa tarğama-i fārsī bi-qalam-i Muḥammad-i Miškāt (Tehran, 1346 H.). Cp. J. Kraemer, *Philosophy in the Renaissance of Islam. Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī and his Circle* (Leiden 1986), p. 210 and n. 169; C. Martini, “Un commento ad *Alpha Elatton* ‘sicut litterae sonant’ nella Bagdad del X secolo”, *Medioevo*, 28 (2003): 69–96; *ead.*, “Yaḥyā Ibn ‘Adī, Commentary on the *Metaphysics* (Book *α*): method and style of composition”, in A. Hasnawi (ed.), *Sciences et philosophie arabes: méthodes, problèmes, cas* (Carthage, forthcoming). Martini (“La tradizione araba”, pp. 98–9 and n. 64; “Un commento ad *Alpha Elatton*”, p. 71, n. 9) shows that Iṣḥāq’s translation of *α* is preserved more fully in Yaḥyā’s commentary than in Averroes’ *Tafsīr*. She also points out (“Un commento ad *Alpha Elatton*”, p. 91) that Yaḥyā had at his disposal Arabic translation(s) of *α* other than Iṣḥāq’s (see also ed. Badawī, p. 202, 9–11; ed. Ḥulayfāt, p. 262, 7–9).

²⁹ See Avicenna, VIII, 1, pp. 327, 12–328, 4; *Metaph. α*, 2, 994a11–16; Uṣṭāt’s translation, pp. 18, 1–19, 2 (bottom of page); Iṣḥāq’s translation, pp. 18, 11–19, 2.

³⁰ See D. Gutas, “Notes and texts from Cairo manuscripts, II: Texts from Avicenna’s library in a copy by ‘Abd-ar-Razzāq aṣ-Ṣignāhī”, *Manuscripts of the Middle East*, 2 (1987): 8–17, p. 13b–14a, #11. Gutas maintains that this abridgement “contains a number of readings better than those in the Leiden Averroes manuscript used by Bouyges, and it should be consulted in a future edition”.

As for book A, the translation in the *Textus* and the *Lemmata* is ascribed to Naẓīf in Text 2 [b], as we have seen. Averroes comments only on the second part of this book (from A, 5, 987 a 6 until the end), and in the *Commenta* does not refer to any other translation.

Uṣṭāt's translation is the translation used in the *Textus* and *Lemmata* of books B-I.³¹ In the *Commenta* on books Γ, Θ and I, Averroes often quotes "another translation" beside Uṣṭāt's.³² This translation is probably Ishāq's. For Ishāq's is the only translation of the *Metaphysics* that, according to the information at our disposal, possibly included these books.³³

Λ is the book for which Averroes uses the highest number of translations. Two different translations are used in the *Textus* and *Lemmata*. The former is the version of Λ that accompanies Mattā's translation of Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary on this book. It is used by Averroes, with some exceptions,³⁴ for *Textus* 1–39 (from the beginning until Λ, 7, 1072 b 16), and *Textus* 42–58 (from Λ, 8, 1073 a 14 until the end).³⁵ The latter

³¹ Pp. 413, 9–437, 8 of Averroes' *Tafsīr* – regarding the end of chapter Γ, 5 (1009 b 25–1011 a 2) – are missing in Arabic. The Arabic translation of these lines in Averroes' *Textus* is Bouyges's retroversion into Arabic of the later Hebrew and Latin versions of the *Tafsīr* (the original Arabic translation of lines 1010 b 23–1011 a 2, however, can be gathered from Averroes' *lemmata* after p. 437, 8). The translation of Γ that Averroes uses in the *Textus* and *Lemmata* presents some omissions (see *Tafsīr*, vol. I, pp. [21]–[23]): 1003 b 25–26; 1004 a 21–22; 1010 b 11 (in the retroversion), 1011 a 30, 1011 b 13, 1012 a 13–15, 1012 a 32, 1012 b 14–15, 1012 b 31.

³² As for book Γ, Averroes quotes an additional translation of Γ, 6, 1011 b 18–19; Γ, 6, 1011 b 20–22; Γ, 7, 1012 a 8; Γ, 7, 1012 a 12–13; Γ, 8, 1012 a 33 (see *Tafsīr*, vol. I, pp. [20]–[23]). An additional translation of Γ, 8, 1012 b 16–30, is quoted in the *Textus*, before Uṣṭāt's translation, but only this latter is then divided into *Lemmata* and commented upon. As for book Θ, Averroes quotes an additional translation of Θ, 1, 1046 a 31–35; Θ, 2, 1046 b 16–17; Θ, 2, 1046 b 17–19; Θ, 2, 1046 b 20; Θ, 2, 1046 b 21–22; Θ, 2, 1046 b 22–24; Θ, 2, 1046 b 24; Θ, 3, 1047 a 20–22; Θ, 7, 1049 a 1–2; Θ, 8, 1050 a 6; Θ, 8, 1050 a 6–7; Θ, 8, 1050 a 9; Θ, 8, 1050 a 13; Θ, 8, 1050 a 13–14; Θ, 8, 1050 b 4–5; Θ, 8, 1050 b 6–8; Θ, 8, 1050 b 33–34; Θ, 8, 1050 b 34–1051 a 2; Θ, 10, 1051 b 2–4 (see *Tafsīr*, vol. II, pp. [51]–[56]). As for book I, Averroes quotes an additional translation of I, 1, 1052 b 27–31; I, 1, 1052 b 32–34; I, 1, 1053 b 2–6; I, 1, 1053 b 7–8; I, 2, 1053 b 18–20; I, 3, 1054 a 32–35; I, 3, 1054 b 5–6; I, 3, 1054 b 13–18; I, 4, 1055 a 25–26; I, 8, 1058 a 8–9; I, 8, 1058 a 11–13; I, 8, 1058 a 15–16; I, 10, 1058 b 26–29; I, 10, 1058 b 29–30 (see *Tafsīr*, vol. III, pp. [60]–[65]).

³³ This is Bouyges' view (*Notice*, p. cxxix).

³⁴ See below, n. 36, cases (1), (3) and (4).

³⁵ M. Geoffroy has convincingly shown ("Remarques") that not only *Textus* 1–39, as maintained by Bouyges, *Notice*, p. cxxxi, but also *Textus* 42 and following are taken from Mattā's translation. The translation of the end of Λ (Λ, 9, 1075b20–1076a4, *Textus* 57–58) – like Averroes' commentary thereupon – are

translation is Uṣṭāt's. It is used for some passages of Λ preceding 1072 b 16,³⁶ and for the Textus and Lemmata corresponding to Λ , 7, 1072 b 16–1073 a 13 (Textus 40–41). Uṣṭāt's translation of Λ , 1–7 (until 1072 b 16) is copied in the margins of the manuscript of Averroes' *Tafsīr*.³⁷ Further light on Uṣṭāt's translations of book Λ can be gained from the inspection of Avicenna's commentary on Λ , 6–10 (1071 b 5–1075 a 27) that is part of his *Kitāb al-Inṣāf* (*Book of the Fair Judgement*).³⁸

Bouyges' retroversion into Arabic of the Hebrew translation (*Tafsīr*, vol. III, pp. 1728–36).

³⁶ (1) The translation of Λ , 1–2, 1069 b 1–9 in Textus 6 (*Tafsīr*, vol. III, p. 1428, 3–8) and related Lemmata (p. 1429, 14–15; p. 1430, 4–5; p. 1431, 9) is identical to the marginal translation (p. 1428, 2–5, bottom of page), and belongs, in all likelihood, not to Mattā's, but to Uṣṭāt's translation (see Bouyges, *Notice*, p. cxxxi). (2) In *Tafsīr*, vol. III, pp. 1536, 12–1537, 11, Averroes reports in Textus 26 (Λ , 5, 1071 a 3–17), besides Mattā's, "another translation" of the text. This translation is probably Uṣṭāt's, since the corresponding marginal translation is absent (the marginal annotator apparently regarded as superfluous to report a second time in the margin the translation quoted by Averroes himself in the Textus). (3) As Averroes himself remarks (*Tafsīr*, vol. III, p. 1545, 12–13), the translation of Λ , 5, 1071 a 23–29 in Textus 27 (pp. 1542, 2–1543, 2; Lemmata: p. 1546, 1–4; p. 1547, 1; p. 1548, 2; p. 1548, 6–7) is not taken from Alexander's commentary, but from the "second translation" (*al-tarğama al-tāniya*), which is almost identical to the marginal translation (p. 1542, 2–4, bottom of page), and is probably Uṣṭāt's translation. (4) Mattā's translation of Λ , 6–7, 1072 a 9–23, as reported by Averroes in the Textus 33 (*Tafsīr*, vol. III, p. 1578, 7–8), is incomplete, and Averroes quotes in the Commentum "another translation" of the same passage (pp. 1580, 9–1582, 5), which Bouyges regards as a Textus on its own (Textus 34); also in this case the additional translation is identical to the marginal one (pp. 1580, 1–1582, 4, bottom of page), and is probably Uṣṭāt's.

³⁷ Except for 1071a3–17 (see above, n. 36). M. Geoffroy ("Remarques") provides and excellent reconstruction of Uṣṭāt's translation of Λ , 6.

³⁸ Arabic text in 'A. Badawī, *Aristū 'inda al-'Arab* (Cairo, 1947), pp. 22–33. Integral French translation and commentary in M. Sebtī, *Sharḥ Kitāb Ḥarf al-lām li al-shaykh al-ra'īs Ibn Sina. Traduction, annotation et présentation*. Mémoire rédigé [...] en vue de l'obtention du D.E.A., sous la direction de M. le Prof. J. Jolivet, École Pratique des Hautes Études, 1992 (I wish to thank the author for having kindly put at my disposal a copy of her work). English translation of Badawī, *Aristū*, pp. 26, 23–27, 4, in S. Pines, "Some distinctive metaphysical conceptions in Themistius' Commentary on Book Lambda and their place in the history of philosophy", in J. Wiesner (ed.), *Aristoteles. Werk und Wirkung. Paul Moraux gewidmet*, vol. II: *Kommentierung, Überlieferung, Nachleben* (Berlin and New York, 1987), pp. 177–204 (repr. in *The Collected Works of Shlomo Pines*, vol. III: *Studies in the History of Arabic Philosophy* [Jerusalem, 1996], pp. 267–94), p. 191. English translation of Badawī, *Aristū*, pp. 23, 21–24, 1, p. 29, 19–21 in D. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition. Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works* (Leiden-New York-København-Köln, 1988), pp. 264, 315–16. A summary of Badawī, *Aristū*, pp. 23, 21–26, 22 by F. Zimmermann is available in R. Sorabji, "Infinite power impressed: the transformation of Aristotle's physics and theology", in R. Sorabji (ed.), *Aristotle Transformed: the Ancient Commentators and their Influence* (London, 1990), pp. 181–98, pp. 187–90.

For in this commentary Avicenna quotes Λ according to Uṣṭāṭ's translation.³⁹

In the *Commenta* of Λ , Averroes often quotes excerpts from additional translations, different from the ones he uses in the *Textus* and the *Lemmata*.⁴⁰ At least three of these translations can be identified. One is Uṣṭāṭ's translation, to which Averroes refers as additional translation in the first half of the commentary (where Mattā's translation is used in the *Textus* and the *Lemmata*). That some of the passages quoted by Averroes belong to Uṣṭāṭ's translation can be determined by their identity, or strong similarity, with the corresponding passages in the marginal translation.⁴¹ A passage of another translation, rendering Λ , 3, 1070 a 2–7, is ascribed by Averroes himself to Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī.⁴² Part of the same passage (1070 a 5–7) is reproduced in the margins of the manuscript of the *Tafsīr* (together with Uṣṭāṭ's translation), where it is also ascribed to Yaḥyā.⁴³ Thus, Averroes' *Tafsīr* informs us of a translation of the *Metaphysics* unaccounted for in *Texts* 1–2:

Abū Zakariyā' Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (d. 363 / 974): book Λ ⁴⁴

All the other pericopes of additional translations quoted by Averroes in the *Commenta* – in so far as they are different from

On the place of this commentary within the *Kitāb al-Inṣāf*, see Gutas, *Avicenna*, pp. 130–40. On its manuscript tradition, see Gutas, “Notes and texts”, and J. R. Michot, “Un important recueil avicennien du VII^e / XIII^e s.: la *Majmū'a* Hüseyin Çelebi 1194 de Brousse”, *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale*, 33 (1991): 121–9. The critical edition and French translation of Avicenna's commentary is being prepared by M. Geoffroy, J. Janssens and M. Sebti.

³⁹ See J. Janssens, Avicenne et sa ‘paraphrase-commentaire’ du livre Lambda (‘*Kitāb al-Inṣāf*’), *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales*, 70 (2003): 401–16; Geoffroy, “Remarques”.

⁴⁰ The complete list is provided by Bouyges in *Tafsīr*, vol. III, pp. [70]–[77].

⁴¹ *Tafsīr*, vol. III, p. 1462, 9–12 (= 1070 a 4–7), “other translation” (cp. the marginal translation at p. 1456, 1–3, bottom of page); p. 1533, 11–12 (= 1071 a 1–2), “second translation” (cp. the marginal translation at p. 1531, 2, bottom of page); p. 1552, 9–13 (= 1071 a 32–34), “second translation” (cp. the marginal translation at p. 549, 3–4, bottom of page); p. 1553, 2–4 (= 1071 a 34–35), “second translation” (cp. the marginal translation at p. 1549, 5, bottom of page); p. 1554, 6–8, p. 1555, 3 (= 1071 a 36–b 1), “other translation” (cp. the marginal translation at pp. 1549, 5–1550, 2, bottom of page). Also the passage of the “third translation” that Averroes quotes at pp. 1525, 10–1526, 1 (= 1070 b 24–25) is significantly similar to the corresponding *locus* in the marginal translation (p. 1523, 1, bottom of page); Bouyges (*Notice*, p. cxxxi), however, regards this passage as part of a translation different from Uṣṭāṭ's.

⁴² *Tafsīr*, vol. III, p. 1463, 3–8 (see Bouyges, *Notice*, p. cxxxi).

⁴³ *Tafsīr*, vol. III, p. 1456, 5–7 (bottom of page).

⁴⁴ See Endress, *The Works of Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī*, p. 28.

the marginal translation and are not ascribed to Yaḥyā – apparently belong to yet another translation. The authorship of this translation is uncertain. On the basis of Text 1, it can be attributed either to Šamlī or to Ishāq.⁴⁵

An anonymous shortened paraphrase of Λ, 6–10 (1071b3–1076a4) is also often recorded among the extant Arabic translations of the *Metaphysics*. This paraphrase is preserved in the already mentioned “Avicennian” manuscript Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, *ḥikma* 6, and has been published twice.⁴⁶ Already present in Avicenna’s library, it had a considerable diffusion, since it was used, for example, by al-Šahrastānī (1086 / 7ca.–1153) in the *Kitāb al-Milal wa-al-niḥal*.⁴⁷ The authorship and date of this paraphrase are uncertain, and none of the different hypotheses advanced in this regard appears to be conclusive.⁴⁸ In addition to being selective, it differs from Aristotle’s original text in two other important respects: first, it omits some passages of the part of text which it reproduces;⁴⁹ second, it displays interpretations of Aristotle’s doctrine that scholars regard as “Neoplatonic”.⁵⁰ For these reasons, this paraphrase

⁴⁵ Bouyges (*Notice*, p. cxxxii) regards Ishāq’s authorship of this translation as unlikely; but the argument *e silentio* he advances (the fact that in Text 1 no translation of Λ is explicitly ascribed to Ishāq) is not conclusive.

⁴⁶ See Gutas, “Notes and texts”, p. 13b, #8. The editions are: Abū al-‘Alā ‘Afīfī, “Targama ‘arabiyya qadīma li-maqālat al-Lām min Kitāb Mā ba‘da l-ṭabī‘a li-Aristū”, *Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Egypt*, 5 (1937): 89–138; Badawī, *Aristū*, pp. 1–11.

⁴⁷ See below, n. 76.

⁴⁸ ‘Afīfī (see Bouyges, *Notice*, p. 140, n. 3) regards Abū Bišr Mattā as the author of this paraphrase. Badawī (*Aristū*, pp. xii–xv) ascribes it to Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn. P. Thillet (“Remarques et notes critiques”, p. 121) suggests that the paraphrase might depend on Aristotle’s original text through a Syriac intermediary, and that its translation from Syriac into Arabic might have been the work of ‘Abd al-Massīḥ ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Nā‘ima al-Ḥimsī (first half of the 9th century), to whom also the translation from Syriac into Arabic of the *Theologia Aristotelis* is ascribed. Establishing the authorship of this paraphrase is made difficult by the cross-contamination – noticed by M. Geoffroy (“Remarques”) – of all the extant Arabic translations of book Λ.

⁴⁹ A list of the most significant omissions is provided by P. Thillet, “Remarques et notes critiques”, p. 120, n. 2.

⁵⁰ The example provided by S. Pines (“Un texte inconnu d’Aristote en version arabe”, *Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 23 [1956]: 5–43; now in *id.*, *Studies in Arabic Versions of Greek Texts and in Mediaeval Science* [Jerusalem and Leiden, 1986], p. 18, n. 3), *i.e.* the fact that the author of the paraphrase calls God “First Cause” (*al-‘illa al-ūlā*) is regarded by Thillet (“Remarques et notes critiques”, p. 120, n. 3) as one of the many Neoplatonic interpretations present in this paraphrase (“le traducteur, familier avec les thèmes néo-platoniciens de la *Théologie* [d’Aristote] [. . .] interprète souvent, glose

can be considered a “translation” of the *Metaphysics* only improperly, and will not be taken into account in what follows.

To summarize: some of the translations of the *Metaphysics* mentioned by the *testimonia* (Texts 1 and 2) are actually extant and preserved in Averroes’ *Tafsīr*. In chronological order, they are the translations by Uṣṭāṭ (α, B-I, Λ), Ishāq (α), Mattā (Λ with Alexander’s commentary), and Naẓīf (A). Other fragments quoted by Averroes might belong to the translations of book Λ by Šamlī and of books Γ, Θ-I, Λ by Ishāq. Averroes’ *Tafsīr* also contains references to a translation otherwise unknown: that of book Λ by Yaḥyā.

§3 THE INDIRECT TRADITION CONCERNING BOOK A

Important information about the Arabic translations of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* can be gained from the references to this work in Arabic writings. An exhaustive survey of this topic exceeds both the limits of the present investigation and the actual state of scholarship. Future editions of still unpublished works, and careful studies of already published writings, hopefully will make a comprehensive account of this subject possible. In the present section, I will focus, in a preliminary way and as an example, on the reception of book A, taking into account the information on this book provided by al-Kindī (d. shortly after 870), al-Fārābī (d. 950), Abū Zakariyā’ Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī (d. 974), Avicenna (d. 1037), al-Šahrastānī (d. 1153) and ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī (d. 1231).

With the progress of research, the number of references to book A that can be found, according to scholars, in al-Kindī’s *Kitāb fī al-Falsafa al-ūlā* (*Book on First Philosophy*) has drastically diminished. While A. L. Ivry records eight references to book A in the commentary to his 1974 English translation,⁵¹ R. Rashed and J. Jolivet’s new edition (1998)

parfois, en termes néo-platoniciens”; Thillet does not mention any other example, though); these Neoplatonic features are the reason why Thillet suggests that the paraphrase and the *Theology of Aristotle* might be by the same author (p. 121). The presence of many Neoplatonic interpretations in the paraphrase is maintained also by Neuwirth, ‘*Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī’s Bearbeitung*, p. 167, n. 20 (who quotes Pines and Thillet).

⁵¹ A. L. Ivry, *Al-Kindī’s Metaphysics* (Albany, 1974) (see the “Index of Aristotelian sources”, p. 206, to which the reference to A, 2, 981 b 27ff., occurring at p. 122 of the commentary has to be added).

omits entirely any reference to this book.⁵² As a matter of fact, the references to A detected by Ivry are quite vague and regard general *topoi*; they might be taken either from other books of the *Metaphysics*, or from other Aristotelian works, or from the tradition of the commentaries on Aristotle, as Ivry himself convincingly documents.⁵³ Even treated cumulatively, they do not prove that the author was directly acquainted with this book of the *Metaphysics*.

One of the most important witnesses of the Arabic tradition of the *Metaphysics* is al-Fārābī's treatise on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (*Maqāla . . . fī Agrād al-ḥakīm fī kull maqāla min al-kitāb al-mawsūm bi-al-ḥurūf*; *Treatise . . . on the purposes of the Sage* [= Aristotle] *in each treatise of the book named by means of letters* [= *Metaphysics*]),⁵⁴ in which books α-M

⁵² *Œuvres philosophiques et scientifiques d'al-Kindī. Volume II: Métaphysique et cosmologie*, par R. Rashed et J. Jolivet (Leiden-Boston-Köln 1998), pp. 1–117. In A. Neuwirth's review of Ivry's translation ("Neue Materialien", pp. 91–5), the references to A detected by Ivry are reduced to two main ones (A, 2, 982 a 21–b 10; A, 3, 983 a 24–31), regarding, respectively, the features of wisdom and the wise man, and the four types of causes. See the detailed discussion of these two references in Martini, "La tradizione araba", pp. 85–90.

⁵³ Ivry, *Al-Kindī's Metaphysics*, pp. 121–2, 122–3; at p. 134, Ivry states: "It is likely that he [*i.e.* al-Kindī] was helped to this eclectic approach by some commentary to one or more of these books [*i.e.* *Posterior Analytics*, *Physics*, *De Anima* and *Metaphysics A*], rather than by direct familiarity with them all".

⁵⁴ *Maqāla* [. . .] *fī Agrād al-ḥakīm fī kull maqāla min al-Kitāb al-mawsūm bi-al-ḥurūf*, in *Alfārābī's Philosophische Abhandlungen*, ed. F. Dieterici (Leiden, 1890), pp. 34–8; *Maqāla fī Agrād mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a*, anonymous edition (Hyderabad, 1349 H). Integral English translation in Bertolacci, *The Reception*, Chapter 3 (see also *id.*, "Ammonius and al-Fārābī: The sources of Avicenna's concept of metaphysics", *Quaestio*, 5 [2005], forthcoming); integral German translation ("Die Abhandlung von den Tendenzen der aristotelischen Metaphysik von dem Zweiten Meister") in *Alfārābī's Philosophische Abhandlungen*, aus den Arabischen übersetzt von F. Dieterici (Leiden, 1892), pp. 54–60; integral French translation in Th.-A. Druart, "Le traité d'al-Fārābī sur les buts de la *Métaphysique* d'Aristote", *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale*, 24 (1982): 38–43 (Druart takes into account Dieterici, Hyderabad and two other MSS); integral Spanish translation in R. Ramón Guerrero, "Al-Fārābī y la 'Metafísica' de Aristóteles", *La Ciudad de Dios*, 196 (1983): 211–40; partial English translation (corresponding to ed. Dieterici, pp. 34, 6–36, 20) in Gutas, *Avicenna*, pp. 237–54 (Gutas takes into account Dieterici and Hyderabad, independently from Druart). Al-Fārābī did probably know the existence and content of books A and N indirectly, through their description in Alexander of Aphrodisias's commentary on A (see the summary by Averroes in *Tafsīr*, vol. III, pp. 1397–8, 1405), which he quotes in the *Fī Agrād* (ed. Dieterici, p. 34, 14–15), but, in all likelihood, he chose to take into account only the books of the *Metaphysics* he was directly acquainted with.

(K included) are mentioned, but not books A and N.⁵⁵ In other words, judging from this essay, al-Fārābī was acquainted with a version of the *Metaphysics* that did not exceed the boundaries of Uṣṭāṭ's translation.⁵⁶ The fact that in other works, like the *Kitāb al-Ġam' bayna ra'yay al-ḥakīmayn Aflātūn al-ilāhī wa-Aristūṭālīs* (*Book on the Agreement of the opinions of the two sages, the divine Plato and Aristotle*),⁵⁷ al-Fārābī refers to

⁵⁵ Contrary to Druart's assertion ("Le traité d'al-Fārābī", p. 39), in this work by al-Fārābī books A and N are not grouped together with, respectively, books *a* and M, but rather omitted (cp. Bouyges, *Notice*, p. cxxix; Gutas, *Avicenna*, p. 242; Ramón Guerrero, "Al-Fārābī y la 'Metafísica' de Aristóteles", p. 234). The description of the first book of the *Metaphysics* refers clearly only to book *a* ("The first treatise of this book includes a sort of introduction and preface to the book, in so far as it shows that *all the types of causes end in a first cause*", ed. Dieterici, p. 36, 21–22; cp. *a*, 2), whereas the content of book A (wisdom as the knowledge of the first causes, and the views of previous thinkers on the number of causes) is not mentioned. The description of the last book of the *Metaphysics* is more vague ("The twelfth treatise deals with the principles of natural and mathematical things", ed. Dieterici, p. 38, 5), but there is no reason to regard it as referring to two books together (M and N), instead of one (M).

⁵⁶ Further evidence of al-Fārābī's reliance on Uṣṭāṭ's translation in this treatise is provided by his use of the term *huwiyya* in the meaning of "being", typical of Uṣṭāṭ's translation, within the description of book E (ed. Dieterici, p. 37, 11–12; cp. *Tafsīr*, p. 552, 3, p. 555, 2). Al-Fārābī's employment of Uṣṭāṭ's translation in other works is witnessed, for example, by the *Kitāb al-Alfāz* (*Alfarabi's Utterances Employed in Logic [Kitāb al-Alfāz al-musta'malah fī al-mantiq]*. Arabic Text, Edited with an Introduction and Notes by M. Mahdi [Beirut, 1968]), pp. 91, 15–92, 3, corresponding to Uṣṭāṭ's translation of *Metaph.* B, 4, 1000 a 9–11, 13–15, 18–19 (*Tafsīr*, p. 247, 3–4, 6–8, 10–12). Another quotation of the *Metaphysics* in the *Kitāb al-Alfāz* (pp. 109, 14–110, 1; cp. *Metaph.* H, 3, 1043 a 21–22) is taken, on the contrary, from a translation different from Uṣṭāṭ's.

⁵⁷ *Kitāb al-Ġam' bayna ra'yay al-ḥakīmayn Aflātūn al-ilāhī wa-Aristūṭālīs*, in *Alfārābī's Philosophische Abhandlungen*, ed. by F. Dieterici (Leiden, 1890), pp. 1–33; Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Ġam' bayna ra'yay al-ḥakīmayn Aflātūn al-ilāhī wa-Aristūṭālīs*, ed. by A. Nader (Beirut, 1960; repr. 1968); Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, *L'harmonie entre les opinions de Platon et d'Aristote. Texte arabe et traduction*, by F. M. Naḡḡār, D. Mallet (Damascus, 1999) (= Naḡḡār-Mallet). German translation in "Die Harmonie zwischen Plato und Aristoteles" in *Alfārābī's Philosophische Abhandlungen*, aus den Arabischen übersetzt von F. Dieterici (Leiden, 1892), pp. 1–53; French translations in E. Abdel-Massih, "Al-Fārābī – Livre de Concordance des deux sages, le divin Platon et Aristote", *Melto*, 5 (1969): 305–58; Fārābī, *Deux traités philosophiques: l'Harmonie entre les opinions des deux sages, le divin Platon et Aristote, et De la religion*, introduction, traduction et notes par Dominique Mallet (Damascus, 1989) (= Mallet); Naḡḡār-Mallet. English translation of ed. Dieterici, pp. 5–7 (= ed. Nader pp. 84–85; ed. Naḡḡār-Mallet, pp. 71–7) in Gutas, *Avicenna*, pp. 227–9. The authenticity of this work is questioned by J. Lameer, *Al-Fārābī and Aristotelian Syllogistics. Greek Theory and Islamic Practice* (Leiden-New York-Köln, 1994), pp. 30–9 (Lameer's view is questioned in Naḡḡār-Mallet, pp. 37–40, and G. Endress, "L'Aristote arabe. Réception, autorité et transformation du Premier Maître", *Medioevo*, 23 [1997]: 1–42, p. 28, who retain al-Fārābī's authorship).

Aristotle's criticism of Plato in the *Metaphysics* could give the impression of a certain knowledge of book A. These references, however – if they are directly taken from the *Metaphysics* – can be explained on account of the *loci paralleli* of A in other books of this work, especially in book M.⁵⁸

Abū Zakariyā' Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, in his commentary on *Metaphysics α*, is aware of the existence and content of book A, which he mentions explicitly as the book of the *Metaphysics* following the one he is commenting upon.⁵⁹ He knew this book probably through the coeval translation by Naḏīf, even though his acquaintance with a different translation cannot be excluded. In any case, Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī represents our first witness of the circulation and use of a translation of A in the Arabic philosophical *milieu*.

In Avicenna's already mentioned *Ilāhiyyāt* of the *Kitāb al-Šifā'*, we find two sets of references to *Metaphysics* A. The first is a long and literal quotation of the passage of A, 5 (986 a 22–26), in which Aristotle expounds the Pythagorean doctrine of the “columns of contraries” (συστοιχίαι). This passage of A (as all the first part of chapter 5) is not extant in Naḏīf's translation; Avicenna refers to it in the context of his own discussion of the opposition between unity and multiplicity (*Ilāhiyyāt* III, 6), which are two of the contraries taken into account by the Pythagoreans.⁶⁰ On closer inspection, however,

⁵⁸ The most significant passage is the following (ed. Naḡḡār-Mallet, p. 143, 1–10; cp. ed. Dieterici, p. 27, 11–20, ed. Nader, p. 100, 66–15): “Dans ses livres sur la *Métaphysique* (*fī ḥurūfihī fīmā ba'da al-ṭab'ati*), Aristote argumente pour critiquer les partisans des modèles et des formes dont on dit qu'ils existent, qu'ils se tiennent, incorruptibles, dans le monde de la divinité. Il explique quelles absurdités s'ensuivent; ainsi il faudrait qu'il y ait là des lignes, des surfaces, des corps, des étoiles et des sphères, qu'existent des mouvements de ces sphères et des cercles, qu'existent là des sciences, comme l'astronomie et la science de la musique, des tons harmonieux et d'autres discordants, des mesures droites, d'autres courbes, des choses chaudes et d'autres froides, en somme, des manières d'être actives et passives, des universaux et des particuliers, des matières et des formes et d'autres absurdités que l'on profère dans ces affirmations et dont la mention prolongerait à l'excès le présent propos. Nous nous dispensons, en raison de leur célébrité, de les répéter ici-même, ainsi que nous l'avons fait des autres discours quand nous les avons évoqués, avons indiqué leur place et avons laissé le soin de les mentionner à qui les cherchera où ils se trouvent afin de se consacrer à leur étude et à leur interprétation” (transl. Naḡḡār-Mallet, p. 142; cp. transl. Mallet 1989, p. 90). As sources of this passage, Naḡḡār-Mallet, n. 1, p. 187, refer to *Metaph.* A, 9, Z, 14, M-N (cp. Mallet, n. 108, p. 113).

⁵⁹ Ed. Badawī, p. 202, 11–12; ed. Ḥulayfāt, p. 262, 9–10. See Martini, “La tradizione araba”, p. 92.

⁶⁰ *Ilāhiyyāt* III, 6, p. 128, 12–16.

Avicenna's quotation appears to depend – at least in part, possibly in its entirety – on the tradition of the Aristotelian commentators, rather than on book A itself.⁶¹ The second set of references to A occurs in Avicenna's exposition and criticism of Plato and the Pythagoreans (*Ilāhiyyāt* VII, 2–3), which resembles in many respects Aristotle's account of these thinkers in A, 5–6, 8–9.⁶² The problem with these references is that they are brief and mostly non-literal; in addition, they do not respect the order of Aristotle's text, and are interwoven with other doxographic material, occasionally taken from *Metaphysics* M.⁶³ Thus, even though the chapters of A to which Avicenna is referring are extant (for the most part) in Naẓīf's translation, the very nature of Avicenna's references makes any textual comparison difficult. Moreover, some of the doctrines to which Avicenna refers do not occur only in *Metaphysics* A, but also in Aristotle's parallel treatment of the same subjects in *Metaphysics* M and N.⁶⁴ Hence, it is not certain whether in these cases Avicenna is referring (only) to book A or (also) to these other books. The possibility of even further Aristotelian sources cannot be excluded: as Avicenna himself remarks in the *Kitāb al-Mabda' wa-al-ma'ād* (*Book of the Provenance and Destination*), Aristotle's criticism of Plato's doctrine of ideas is contained in many Aristotelian works.⁶⁵

Fortunately, however, the evidence at our disposal allows us to assume that Avicenna's references to A in the *Ilāhiyyāt* are taken from a translation of this book other than Naẓīf's. For in

⁶¹ See Bertolacci, “*Metafisica* A, 5, 986 a 22–26”.

⁶² As for Plato, cp. *Ilāhiyyāt* VII, 2, pp. 310, 14–311, 8, with *Metaph.* A, 6, 987 a 32–b 10 (see also below, Table 2.1). As for the Pythagoreans, cp. *Ilāhiyyāt* VII, 2, p. 312, 16–17, with *Metaph.* A, 5, 985 b 24–986 a 3, A, 6, 987 b 24–25, A, 6, 987 b 27–31, and *Ilāhiyyāt* VII, 2, pp. 313, 17–314, 2, with *Metaph.* A, 5, 985 b 27–31, 32–33.

⁶³ Cp., for example, *Ilāhiyyāt* VII, 2, p. 314, 4 (“Most of the Pythagoreans think the mathematical number to be the principle, without, however, being separate”) with *Metaph.* M, 6, 1080 b 16–18.

⁶⁴ Avicenna's reference to the Pythagoreans in *Ilāhiyyāt* VII, 2, p. 312, 16–17, can be compared not only with the passages of *Metaph.* A, 5 and A, 6 mentioned above (see n. 62), but also with *Metaph.* M, 6, 1080 b 16–18, M, 8, 1083 b 10–11, N, 3, 1090 a 22–23.

⁶⁵ *Al-Mabda' wa-al-Ma'ād* / li-al-Šayḥ al-Ra'īs Abī 'Alī al-Ḥusayn b. 'Abdallāh Ibn Sīnā, ed. A. Nūrānī, Silsila-i Dāniš-i Īrānī, 36 (Tehran 1363 H. / 1984), p. 85, 6–7: “It seems that by ‘forms’ Plato means these forms [*i.e.* the intelligible forms that are thought by the heavenly intelligences]. But the apparent [meaning] of his doctrine is inconsistent and false, [as] Aristotle has thoroughly discussed in many books”.

Table 2.1: Quotation of *Metaph.* A, 6, 987 b 14–16 in Avicenna’s *Ilāhiyyāt*

Avicenna’s <i>Ilāhiyyāt</i>	Aristotle’s <i>Metaphysics</i>	Nazīf’s Arabic translation of <i>Metaphysics</i> A in Averroes’ <i>Tafsīr</i>
(VII, 2, p. 311, 14–15) As for the mathematical, in his [= Plato’s] opinion they are entities [that exist] between Forms (<i>ṣuwar</i>) and the material things. ⁶⁶	(A, 6, 987 b 14–16) Further, besides sensible things and Forms (εἶδη) he says there are the objects of mathematics, which occupy an intermediate position. ⁶⁷	(pp. 65, 14–66, 1) But they only disputed about the sensibles and the mathematical species (<i>anwā’ ta’ālmiyyāt</i>), saying of the latter that they are intermediate between [the classes of existing] realities. ⁶⁸

the only reference in the second set that resembles a literal quotation, Avicenna’s reworking of the original text of Aristotle (A, 6, 987 b 14–16) is closer to this latter than Nazīf’s translation is. The relevant passage of the *Ilāhiyyāt* is compared with Aristotle’s original text and Nazīf’s Arabic translation in Table 2.1.

It is evident from Table 2.1 that Avicenna’s quotation conveys just the same point that Aristotle is establishing – namely the intermediate character of mathematical between Forms and sensibles – whereas Nazīf’s translation, at least in the form in which it is extant, reproduces this doctrine obscurely, in so far as it conflates mathematical and forms into the “mathematical species”, and does not specify the identity of the realities to which the mathematical species are intermediate. Therefore, a dependence of Avicenna on Nazīf’s translation, at least in this case, appears unlikely. From the terminological point of view, it is noteworthy that in Avicenna’s quotation the

⁶⁶ *fa-ammā al-ta’lmiyyātu fa-innahā ‘indahū ma’ānin bayna al-ṣuwari wa-al-māddiyyāti.*

⁶⁷ ἔτι δὲ παρὰ τὰ αἰσθητὰ καὶ τὰ εἶδη τὰ μαθηματικὰ τῶν πραγμάτων εἶναι φησι μεταξύ.

⁶⁸ *wa-innamā ‘ānadū fī al-maḥsūsāti wa-al-anwā’i al-ta’ālmiyyāti allatī yaqūlūna innahā mutawassīṭatun fīmā bayna al-umūri.* I wish to thank Gerhard Endress for his help in the interpretation of this passage.

Arabic term “form” (*ṣūra*, pl. *ṣuwar*) corresponds to the Greek term “form” or “species” (εἶδος, pl. εἶδη), whereas in Naẓīf’s translation this latter is rendered as “species” (*naw‘*, pl. *anwā‘*). The significance of this aspect will soon become clear.

The partial evidence, provided by Avicenna, of the existence of a translation of A different from Naẓīf’s is corroborated by al-Šahrastānī’s *Kitāb al-Milal wa-al-niḥal* (*Books of Religions and Arbitrary Creeds*). For this work contains, in the section dealing with Plato, an explicit and lengthy reference to book A of the *Metaphysics* (A, 6, 987 a 32–b 10.18).⁶⁹ What is remarkable about this quotation is that it does not correspond to Naẓīf’s translation of A, as it is pointed out in the French translation of the second part of the *Milal*.⁷⁰

The quotation of *Metaphysics* A, 6, 987 a 32–b 10.18, in the *Milal* deserves full attention, since it is rather long and literal. On closer inspection, it appears to be followed by a reference to a passage of *Metaphysics* M, unnoticed so far, which is equally noteworthy.⁷¹ A comparison of the relevant passage of the *Milal* with the original text of the *Metaphysics* and Naẓīf’s translation of A is provided in Table 2.2.

⁶⁹ Al-Šahrastānī, *Kitāb al-Milal wa-al-niḥal*, ed. A. al-Sa’id al-Mandūh (Beirut, 1994), Second Part, p. 79, 5–12 (= ed. Badrān [Cairo, 1951–1955], pp. 891–2; ed. Cureton [London, 1842–1846], p. 288); French transl. in Šahrastānī, *Livre des religions et des sectes*, vol. 2, transl. with notes by J. Jolivet and G. Monnot (Leuven, 1993), p. 229 (“Aristote, dans le livre A de la *Métaphysique*, raconte que dans sa jeunesse Platon fréquenta Cratyle et en retint [la thèse] qu’on rapporte d’Héraclite: ‘toutes les choses se corrompent et la science ne peut les embrasser’; puis qu’il fréquenta après lui Socrate, dont la doctrine comportait la recherche des définitions mais non pas l’étude des natures des choses, sensibles et autres. Ainsi Platon crut que l’étude de Socrate [s’attachait] à d’autres choses que les sensibles, car les définitions ne concernent pas les sensibles puisqu’elles ne portent que sur des choses perpétuelles et universelles, je veux dire les genres et les espèces. Cela étant, Platon n’appela pas les choses universelles, des formes, parce que [ces choses] sont uniques, tout en pensant que les choses sensibles n’existent que parce qu’elles participent des formes, puisque les formes sont pour elles des épures et des modèles et leur sont antérieures”). The quotation of A that M. Bouyges (*Notice*, p. cxciv; see Martini, “La tradizione araba”, p. 97) has detected in Šadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Širāzī’s (= Mullā Šadrā, d. 1640) *al-Ḥikma al-muta’aliya fī al-asfār al-aqliyya al-arba’a* (*Transcendent Wisdom on the Four Intellectual Journeys*) is almost *verbatim* identical to this passage of the *Milal* (see the edition by the Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāṭ al-‘Arabī (Beirut, 1981), vol. 6, pp. 218, 21–219, 7). For the dependence of Mullā Šadrā’s *al-Ḥikma al-muta’aliya* and other works of his on al-Šahrastānī’s *Milal*, see U. Rudolph, *Die Doxographie des Pseudo-Ammonios. Ein Beitrag zur neuplatonischen Überlieferung im Islam* (Wiesbaden, 1989), pp. 24, 26–32.

⁷⁰ See Šahrastānī, *Livre des religions et des sectes*, pp. 229–30, n. 34.

⁷¹ Al-Šahrastānī, *Kitāb al-Milal*, p. 79, 5–12.

Table 2.2: Quotation of *Metaph. A*, 6, 987 a 32–b 10.18 in al-Šahrastānī's *Kitāb al-Milal wa-al-niḥal*

Šahrastānī, <i>Milal</i>	Aristotle, <i>Metaphysics</i>	Naẓīf's Arabic translation of <i>Metaphysics A</i> in Averroes' <i>Tafsīr</i>
<p>[1] (p. 79, 5–6) Aristotle, in the treatise “A Major” of the book <i>Metaphysics</i>, reports that</p>	<p>(A, 6, 987a32–33) For, having in his youth first become familiar with Cratylus and with the Heraclitean doctrines</p>	<p>(p. 63, 1–2) <u>The first thing that occurred after Democritus was the views of the Heracliteans,</u></p>
<p>[3] (p. 79, 7) namely that all the <u>sensible things are</u> corruptible, and knowledge does not embrace them.</p>	<p>(987a33–34) (that <u>all sensible things are ever in a state of flux</u> and there is no knowledge about them), (987a34–b1) these views he held even in later years.</p>	<p>(p. 63, 2) about the fact that <u>all the other things have a constant flux,</u> and there is no knowledge of them. (p. 62, 3) He kept these views, in this way, for ever.</p>
<p>[5] (p. 79, 7–8) Then, after him, he frequented Socrates, [6] (p. 79, 8–9) whose doctrine was to seek definitions without investigating the nature of sensible and other things.</p>	<p>(987b1–4) Socrates, however, was busying himself about ethical matters and neglecting the world of nature as a whole but seeking the universal in these ethical matters, and fixed thought for the first time on definitions;</p>	<p>(p. 63, 3–4) Socrates discussed only ethical things, not something belonging to the universal nature . . . (lac.)</p>
<p>[7] (p. 79, 9) Plato thought that Socrates'</p>	<p>(987b4–6) Plato accepted his teaching, but held</p>	<p>(p. 65, 6–7) [Plato] accepted that, since he regarded the being</p>

Table 2.2: *Continued*

Šahrastānī, <i>Milal</i>	Aristotle, <i>Metaphysics</i>	Naẓīf's Arabic translation of <i>Metaphysics A</i> in Averroes' <i>Tafsīr</i>
investigation regarded <u>things other than the sensible ones</u> .	that the problem applied not to any sensible thing but to <u>entities of another kind</u> –	of this after the model of the being of <u>permanent things</u> , whereas in sensible things there is nothing stable.
[8] (p. 79, 9–11) For definitions do not belong to sensible things, since they apply to things that are lasting and universal, namely genera and species.	(987b6–7) for this reason, that the common definition could not be a definition of any sensible things, as they were always changing.	(p. 65, 7–8) It is also impossible that sensible things have a certain definition, which they share, since they are constantly in change.
[9] (p. 79, 11a) Therefore, [there was] Plato's calling the universal things “forms” (<i>ṣuwar</i>), ⁷²	(987b7–8) Things of this other sort, then, he called Ideas (<i>ἰδέαι</i>),	(p. 65, 8–9) [Plato] called “forms” (<i>ṣuwar</i>) those [things], the same [i.e. unchangeable], that belong to the existents. ⁷³

⁷² *wa-‘inda dālīka <mā> sammā aflāṭūnu al-ašyā’a al-kullīyyata ṣuwaran*. The *lectio difficilior mā sammā* (in which *mā* is not a negative particle but a *mā maṣdariyya*) is adopted in Cureton's edition, attested by the majority of textual witnesses of Badrān's edition, and supported also by the MS Yale University, Beinecke Library, Landberg Collection #615 (I take this information from the unpublished paper by Jennifer Bryson “‘The View of Plato’ in Šahrastānī's *Al-Milal wa-l-Niḥal*”, Yale University, Spring 1996; I wish to thank the author for having put her work at my disposal). It occurs also in Mullā Šadrā's version of al-Šahrastānī's quotation (ed. cit., p. 219, 5), and is retained in the French translation of the *Milal* (Šahrastānī, *Livre des religions et des sectes*, p. 229, n. 34, where it is regarded, however, as a negative particle). I wish to thank Gerhard Endress for his help in the interpretation of this passage.

⁷³ *wa-sammā allatī hiya li-al-mawḡūdāti wāḥidatuḥ bi-‘aynihā ṣuwaran*. The Arabic corresponds *grosso modo* to the Greek (οὗτος οὖν τὰ μὲν τοιαῦτα τῶν ὄντων ἰδέαι προσηγόρευσε), if we suppose a (mis)reading of τοιαῦτα as τὰ αὐτά. I am indebted to Dimitri Gutas and Gerhard Endress for the interpretation of this passage.

Table 2.2: *Continued*

Šahrastānī, <i>Milal</i>	Aristotle, <i>Metaphysics</i>	Naẓīf's Arabic translation of <i>Metaphysics A</i> in Averroes' <i>Tafsīr</i>
[10] (p. 79, 11b) since they are unique,	(987b18) . . . while the <u>Form</u> (τὸ εἶδος) itself is in each case unique.	(p. 66, 3) <u>The species</u> (<i>al-naw'</i>) is the same thing that exists in each one. ⁷⁴
[11] (p. 79, 11–12a) and his thinking that the sensible things do not exist except by participation in the forms (<i>al-ṣuwar</i>).	(987b8–10) . . . and sensible things, he said, were apart from these, and were all called after these; for the multitude of things which have the same name as the Form (τοῖς εἶδεσιν) exist by participation in it [<i>i.e.</i> in the Form].	(p. 65, 9–11) As for all the sensibles, they are said in virtue of [the forms] and for the sake of them; the multiplicity that agrees in the name participates in the species (<i>al-naw'</i>).
[12] (p. 79, 12b–13a) The forms, therefore, are drawings and models of them [<i>i.e.</i> of the sensible things], being anterior to them.	(M, 4, 1078 b 30–32) But Socrates did not make the universals or the definitions exist apart; his successors, however, gave them separate existence, and this was the kind of thing they called Ideas.	
[13] (p. 79, 13b–14) Socrates posited the definitions only in absolute terms, without considering the sensible and the non-sensible; Plato, on the contrary, believed that he had assigned them to the non-sensible, and therefore he established them as common models.		

⁷⁴ *wa-al-naw'u fa-huwa huwa al-ṣay'u al-mawǧūdu li-kulli wāḥidin*. Naẓīf appears to have (mis)read ἐν ἑκάστων in the Greek (τὸ δὲ εἶδος αὐτὸ ἐν ἑκάστων μόνον) as ἐν ἑκάστω (“in each one”, *li-kulli wāḥidin*).

Four aspects of Table 2.2 are noteworthy. First, sections [2], [3], [7] and [10] of al-Šahrastānī's quotation are remarkably closer to Aristotle's original text than Naẓīf's translation is (the relevant sentences in this regard are underlined in the table). Second, in section [11] of al-Šahrastānī's quotation the Arabic term "form" (*ṣūra*, pl. *ṣuwar*) corresponds to "form" or "species" (εἶδος), that Naẓīf renders by means of another Arabic word, *i.e.* "species" (*naw'*, pl. *anwā'*).⁷⁵ Third, the quotation of line 987 b 18 in section [10] precedes, instead of following, the quotation of lines 987 b 8–10 in section [11]. Fourth, the quotation of A, 6, 987 a 32–b 10.18, in sections [1]–[11] is followed by a quotation of M, 4, 1078 b 30–32, in section [13]. The first aspect (greater similarity to the Greek original) shows clearly that al-Šahrastānī's quotation does not depend on Naẓīf's translation. The second aspect (rendering of εἶδος as *ṣūra*) is a terminological feature that we have already noticed in Avicenna's quotation of A (see Table 2.1). The significance of the third and the fourth aspect (the restructuring of the original text, and the connection between the quotation of A and a quotation of M) has to be properly evaluated, since it entails some kind of intervention by al-Šahrastānī (or his source) on the original text. These two features, as we have seen, were also typical of Avicenna's approach to A.

It is evident that some kind of textual knowledge of book A, not deriving from Naẓīf's translation of this book, was accessible to al-Šahrastānī. It is difficult, however, to determine the source of this knowledge, *i.e.* to assess whether the text he quotes was taken from an overall translation of book A that he had at his disposal, or rather circulated autonomously in some kind of intermediate source on account of its doxographical or biographical interest. The other quotations of the *Metaphysics* in the *Milal* provide contrasting indications in this regard, since they are both direct and indirect.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Naẓīf's use of *naw'* to translate εἶδος is confirmed by section [10]. In section [9], both the translation used by al-Šahrastānī and Naẓīf render with *ṣūra* the Greek term "idea" (ἰδέα).

⁷⁶ The quotation of Λ, 6, 1071 b 3–5, in *Milal*, p. 103, 5–7 (*qāla fī kitābi uṭlūlūḡiyā min ḥarfi al-lāmi inna al-ḡawhara yuqālu 'alā talāṭati aḡrābin itnāni ṭab'īyyāni wa-wāḡhidun ḡayru mutaḡharrikin*; "Aristote dit, dans le livre de la Théologie, à la lettre Lambda: 'substance se dit de trois sortes [d'êtres], deux naturelles et une immobile', Šahrastānī, *Livre des religions et des sectes*, p. 283, nn. 2–3), is taken *verbatim* from the anonymous paraphrase of Λ (Badawī, *Aristū*,

While the evidence provided by Avicenna and al-Šahrastānī is not conclusive when treated individually, considered jointly it points toward the existence of a second Arabic translation of A besides Naẓīf's. There are basically two reasons for this assumption. First, Avicenna, on the one hand, and al-Šahrastānī, on the other, refer to *distinct* passages of A independently of Naẓīf's translation. Second, they refer to the key-concept of the texts they are quoting (Platonic "forms" or "species") by means of a term that is not only different from the one used by Naẓīf, but is also *the same* in both of them. Despite the fact that the texts taken into account in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 regard a single chapter of A (A, 6), and that the similarity in terminology between Avicenna and al-Šahrastānī can be tested only in the case of a single word, these two features appear to imply the existence of a larger and common source which these two authors are quoting. On account of this evidence, therefore, I tentatively assume that Avicenna's quotation of A, 6, 987 b 14–16, and al-Šahrastānī's quotation of A, 6, 987 a 32–b 10.18, depend on one and the same source, namely a translation of A which was different from – and closer to the Greek than – Naẓīf's, and in which εἶδος was rendered as *šūra*. Future research will corroborate, I hope, this provisional hypothesis.

If we regard the better rendering of the original text as a sign of improvement and, consequently, of later composition, we can imagine that this supposed second translation of A was later than Naẓīf's. In this case, it would have been accomplished sometime between the second half of the 10th century (when Naẓīf was active) and 1020–1027 (the probable date of composition of the *Šifā'*). But its language and terminology might indicate also an earlier date of composition.⁷⁷

'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī's *Kitāb fī 'Ilm mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a* (*Book on the Science of Metaphysics*) contains, in chapters 1–16,

p. 3, 4–5; cp. *Tafsīr*, vol. III, pp. 1555, 9–1556, 1; pp. 1555, 1–1556, 1 at the bottom of page). The reworking of Λ, 6, 1071 b 12–20, immediately following (p. 103, 7–17), appears to be based on the same paraphrase (see Šahrastānī, *Livre des religions et des sectes*, p. 283, n. 6). A further quotation of Λ (Šahrastānī, *Livre des religions et des sectes*, p. 132, 3–5) is, on the other hand, indirect, being taken from Themistius' commentary on Λ.

⁷⁷ In early translations, like those by Ibn al-Biṭrīq, *šūra* is employed indiscriminately for εἶδος and ἰδέα, as it happens in the translation of A used by al-Šahrastānī (see above, n. 72; I owe this information to Gerhard Endress). We cannot either exclude, of course, the possibility that this translation and the one by Naẓīf are coeval and independent from each other.

a summary of books α and A (intermingled) and B- Λ of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.⁷⁸ The relation of 'Abd al-Laṭīf's compendium with the extant Arabic translations of the *Metaphysics* has still to be ascertained.⁷⁹ As for book A, according to Angelika Neuwirth's analysis, 'Abd al-Laṭīf refers to passages spread throughout the book (from its beginning until the very first lines of chapter 9). 'Abd al-Laṭīf's compendium and the extant translation of A by Naẓīf, however, cannot be compared, since the two overlap only in two brief passages (A, 8, 989 b 29–32; A, 9, 990 a 34–b 1), and in both cases 'Abd al-Laṭīf refers to Aristotle's text quite vaguely.⁸⁰ The passages of A quoted by Avicenna and al-Šahrastānī are not taken into account in 'Abd al-Laṭīf's compendium. What we can conclude from the inspection of 'Abd al-Laṭīf's compendium, therefore, is that the translation of A he was using (either Naẓīf's or another one) was an integral version of this book.⁸¹

The indirect tradition of book A in Arabic witnesses the progressive assimilation of this book. Absent in Uṣṭāt's translation, referred to indirectly by al-Kindī and probably unknown to al-Fārābī, from the second half of the 10th century it was translated at least once (by Naẓīf), possibly also a second time. In this way, it was mentioned by Yaḥyā ibn 'Ādī (10th c.), quoted by Avicenna (11th c.) and al-Šahrastānī (12th c.), and extensively paraphrased by 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī (13th c.).

§4 THE AVAILABLE DATA AND THEIR INTERPRETATION

The data presented in the previous sections can be now arranged in chronological order in the following table:

⁷⁸ Chapters 1 (books A and α) and 13–16 (book Λ) are critically edited by Neuwirth, "Neue Materialien"; *ead.*, 'Abd al-Laṭīf (see the review by D. Gutas, "Editing Arabic philosophical texts", *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*, 25 [1980], coll. 213–222). On 'Abd al-Laṭīf's reception of book A, see Martini, "La tradizione araba", pp. 93–7.

⁷⁹ "[...] das genaue Abhängigkeitsverhältnis zu den einzelnen arabischen Versionen der verschiedenen Metaphysik-Bücher noch im einzelnen zu untersuchen ist" (Neuwirth, "Neue Materialien", p. 92).

⁸⁰ Also the second reference ("Likewise, who postulates the models which are known as Platonic forms [*šuwār*] . . ."), which Neuwirth includes between square brackets designating, in her notation system, the "faithful paraphrases" ("getreue Paraphrasen", p. 93), is, in fact, only very loosely related to the passage of A that Neuwirth associates with it.

⁸¹ An Arabic version of A, 1 is also attested by the Latin translation of this chapter that is preserved in the MS Bibl. Apostolica Vaticana, Ott. Lat. 2048; Martini ("The Arabic version of the Book *Alpha Meizon*") has shown that this translation was made from Arabic.

Table 3: Overall survey of the Arabic translations of the *Metaphysics*

	books translations							
	Ustāt Šamlī (IXc.)	Ishāq (d.910)	Mattā Yahyā (d.940)	Yahyā in Yahyā (d.974)	Nazīf (2nd half Xc.)	ʿIsā (d.1008)	in Avicenna (d. 1037)	and Šahrastānī (d. 1153) [?]
A					e			f
α	e	e						
B	e	Avic.?						
Γ	e	f?		Sy.: a				
Δ	e	Avic.?						
E	e							
Z	e							
H	e							
Θ	e	f?						
I	e	f?						
K	a							
Λ	e	f?	Al.: e f Th.: a					
M	a		a				a	
N					a			

legenda:

a = attested

e = extant

f = fragments

Avic. = quoted by Avicenna

Sy. = with Syrianus' commentary

Th. = with Themistius' commentary

Al. = with Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary

The two most salient features of the translation activity regarding Aristotle's *Metaphysics* emerging from Table 3 are, first, the high number of translations of this work, and, second, the long period of time during which they were accomplished. As for the first point, the available sources inform us of seven, possibly eight, distinct scholars, with different philosophical backgrounds and affiliations, who engaged in rendering (larger or smaller) portions of the *Metaphysics* into Arabic. Few other Greek philosophical works have been translated into Arabic so many times and by so many authors. As for the second point, the translation activity regarding the *Metaphysics* lasted for two centuries: translations started in the 9th century (Uṣṭāṭ) and ceased – as far as we know – around the end of the 10th (‘Īsā). Also in this regard the *Metaphysics* represents a prime case in the Graeco-Arabic translation movement. In other words, the *Metaphysics* was repeatedly translated into Arabic during the last two of the three centuries of the Graeco-Arabic translation movement (8th–10th cc.). All this attests to the great and persistent importance of this work in the Arab world.

In a diachronic perspective, the translation activity related to the *Metaphysics* can be divided into three distinct phases. The first phase encompasses the first three translations (by Uṣṭāṭ, Šamlī and Ishāq). It is marked by the rendering of the main bulk of the work (the two most extensive translations, by Uṣṭāṭ and Ishāq, belong to this initial period), and by the focus on book Λ (probably all three translators rendered this book into Arabic, and one of them – Šamlī – translated it independently of the rest of the work). The second phase comprehends the four subsequent translations (two by Mattā, one by Yaḥyā, one known to Yaḥyā). It is characterized by new versions of certain previously translated books of the *Metaphysics*, in so far as they are integral parts, or useful complements, of some Greek commentaries thereupon. Thus book Λ is translated twice by Mattā together with the commentaries, respectively, by Alexander of Aphrodisias and Themistius, and the translation of book B together with Syrianus' commentary is reportedly known to Yaḥyā. The importance still assigned to book Λ is witnessed, besides Mattā's translations, by Yaḥyā's version of this book together with the following one (M). The third phase, finally, encompasses the last three translations (those by Naẓīf and ‘Īsā, and the one witnessed by Avicenna and Šahrastānī). Its main feature is the rendering into Arabic of the

books of the *Metaphysics* that were still untranslated, *i.e.* of book A (by Naẓīf and in Avicenna / Šahrastānī) and book N (by Naẓīf). Among the already translated books, the focus gradually shifts from Λ to M, as the independent translation of this latter by ‘Īsā seems to attest.

The three phases just outlined reflect, roughly speaking, three different approaches to the *Metaphysics*: (i) the transmission of the work on a large scale (first phase); (ii) the closer inspection and deeper analysis of some of its known parts (second phase); (iii) the shift of attention towards the parts still unknown (third phase). In general terms, it is as though, after the initial period of “exposition” to most of the *Metaphysics* (first phase), Arab philosophers focused on what they regarded as its most important portion, *i.e.* book Λ (second phase); then, once the “core” of the *Metaphysics* was discovered, and the importance of the work in its entirety fully appreciated, the need was felt to fill in the gaps, *i.e.* to translate the parts of the Greek original still missing in Arabic (third phase). This process is not very different from our ordinary way of reading a book with which we are unfamiliar: first, we glance over its chapters; then, we discover something deep or original in some of its part, and regard the book as worthy to be read; finally, we go back to it and read carefully what we have overlooked before. It has to be noticed, however, that the limits between the aforementioned three phases of the Arabic translation of the *Metaphysics* are – as it should be expected – fluid: each phase both prepares and somehow continues in the following. Thus, Šamlī’s translation of book Λ in the first phase anticipates the big amount of philological effort directed towards this book in the second phase. Likewise, Yaḥyā’s translation of book M in the second phase is in continuity with ‘Īsā’s version of this same book in the third phase.⁸²

⁸² In the Arabic translation of Paul the Persian’s essay on the classification of the parts of Aristotle’s philosophy, preserved in Miskawayh’s *Tartīb al-sa’ādāt* and tentatively ascribed by D. Gutas to Abū Bišr Mattā ibn Yūnus, we find the following statement that Gutas regards as a comment by the translator: “Some of the books of the *Metaphysics* were [= have been] translated into Arabic, others were not” (*K. al-Sa’āda li-Ibn Miskawayh fī falsafat al-aḥlāq*, ed. ‘Alī al-Ṭūbḡī [Cairo 1335 / 1917; repr. 1346(?) / 1928], p. 69, 16; see D. Gutas, “Paul the Persian on the classification of the parts of Aristotle’s philosophy: A milestone between Alexandria and Baghdad”, *Der Islam*, 60 [1983]: 231–67, p. 235). If Gutas’ hypothesis about the identity of the translator of Paul the Persian’s treatise is correct, the initiator of the second phase of translations of the *Metaphysics* (Mattā) was well aware that the Arabic *Metaphysics* was incomplete, and

The first two phases mirror two significant stages of the history of early Arabic philosophy, for they are linked, respectively, with two of the most important schools of the Arabic *falsafa*. The first phase can be associated with the circle of al-Kindī, to which the main translator of this phase (Uṣṭāṭ) belonged. The theological emphasis typical of al-Kindī's approach to the *Metaphysics* is congruent with the focus on book Λ which we have seen to mark this initial phase. The entire second phase, on the other hand, is the expression of the group of Aristotelian scholars working in Baǧdād, whose first master (Mattā) and most significant exponent (Yaḥyā) were the two translators of this phase. The kind of exegesis of Aristotle's *corpus* inspired by the Peripatetic tradition, typical of the Baǧdādī school, is evident in the translations of the commentaries on the *Metaphysics* by Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius and Syrianus, that Mattā and Yaḥyā joined to their Arabic version of the corresponding books of Aristotle's work. The diachronic overview of the Arabic translations of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, therefore, sheds further light on the history of Arabic philosophy, in so far as it is the reflex of the different trends and sensibilities that were at work in the Arab philosophical *milieu* when these translations were accomplished.

From a synchronic point of view, the core of the translation activity concerning the *Metaphysics* is constituted by book Λ, *i.e.* by Aristotle's natural theology. According to our sources, this book was translated into Arabic six times (by Uṣṭāṭ, Ishāq, Šamlī, Yaḥyā and – possibly twice – by Mattā). Two Greek commentaries (by Alexander of Aphrodisias and Themistius) on this book were translated as well (by Mattā). Both the first and the second phase of the translation process, as we have seen, are centered around Λ. But also the third phase is somehow related to Λ, in so far as it focuses on books like M and N, which are the continuation and the complement of Λ.⁸³ It is thus clear that all the translation activity concerning Aristotle's *Metaphysics* was motivated by a strong theological interest. This is not surprising, in the light of the theological motivations lying behind the Arabic translations of other parts

somehow prefigured the direction that the next phase of translations would have taken.

⁸³ The importance of Λ is also attested by the circulation of an anonymous paraphrase of this book (see above, §2).

of the Aristotelian corpus, like the *Topics* and the *Physics*, as D. Gutas has well documented.⁸⁴ In more general terms, in the Arabic translations of the *Metaphysics* can be detected, at its germinal stage, one of the main features of the Arab metaphysical speculation, namely the emphasis on, and the expansion of, the theological side of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. This privileged attention to natural theology within metaphysics characterizes, in different respects, the metaphysical *œuvre* of al-Kindī, al-Fārābī and Avicenna.

The second most important book of the *Metaphysics*, after Λ, is apparently Μ, of which three translations, one in each of the three phases of the process outlined above, are attested (by Uṣṭāṭ, Yaḥyā and 'Īsā). Since book Μ is entirely devoted to the exposition and criticism of the doctrine of the ideas and of other tenets of Plato's philosophy, the translations of this book necessarily conveyed a better knowledge both of Plato's philosophy in itself and of Aristotle's polemical attitude towards it. There are two implications to this fact. First, the Arabic translations of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* ought to be included among the textual sources by means of which Plato was known in the Medieval Arab world.⁸⁵ Second, the anti-Platonic bias that Aristotle displays, *inter alia*, in *Metaphysics* Μ calls into question the originally Porphyrian and later Farabian idea of the harmony and complementarity of Plato's and Aristotle's philosophies. The translation movement regarding the *Metaphysics* – some of whose aspects have occasionally been interpreted in the light of such a “concordistic” view⁸⁶ – appears to be alien to this idea and, on the contrary, to operate against it. Whether the translations of the *Metaphysics* simply prevented this idea from spreading, or might have fostered it, by making the contrast between Plato and Aristotle striking and a conciliation of it even more desirable, is a question worth further

⁸⁴ Gutas, *Greek Thought*, chapter 3.

⁸⁵ A statement like “The Plato to whom al-Fārābī [...] Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Bādjdja and Ibn Rushd refer is, whether explicitly or implicitly, always the Plato of Plotinus and his followers” (R. Walzer, “Aflāṭūn”, *ET*², vol. I [1960], p. 234b) requires qualifications: at least in Avicenna's case, he is also the Plato of Aristotle.

⁸⁶ See above, n. 16. We may wonder, though, whether the idea of an inner congruence between the philosophy of Plato and that of Aristotle can account, if not for the original extent, at least for the subsequent reception of the translations, *i.e.* for the actual loss, or the incomplete transmission, of the versions of those books (A, Μ and Ν) in which Aristotle more openly criticizes Plato.

investigation. In any case, a new scenario on the reception of Plato's philosophy in the Arab world, and on the relationship between his philosophy and its Aristotelian counterpart, emerges from the study of the Arabic translations of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Future research will hopefully elucidate this topic in greater detail.

By reflecting the succession of different philosophical schools, pointing at some basic features of the Arab metaphysical thought, and opening new perspectives on the Plato Arabus, the Arabic translations of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* are a significant event not only in the context of the translation movement from Greek into Arabic, but also as a chapter of the early history of Arabic philosophy.